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# (12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 294 190 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 24.04.1996

(21) Application No 9506864.9

(22) Date of Filing 03.04.1995

(30) Priority Data

(31) 9420912  
9423469

(32) 17.10.1994  
21.11.1994

(33) GB

(51) INT CL<sup>6</sup>

A01K 97/18

(52) UK CL (Edition O )

A1A A7

U1S S1025

(56) Documents Cited

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(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition N ) A1A A5 A7

INT CL<sup>6</sup> A01K 97/18 97/24

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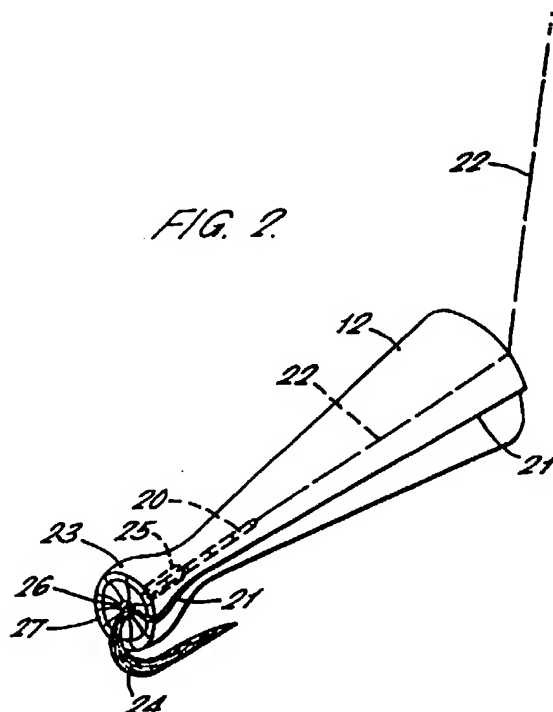
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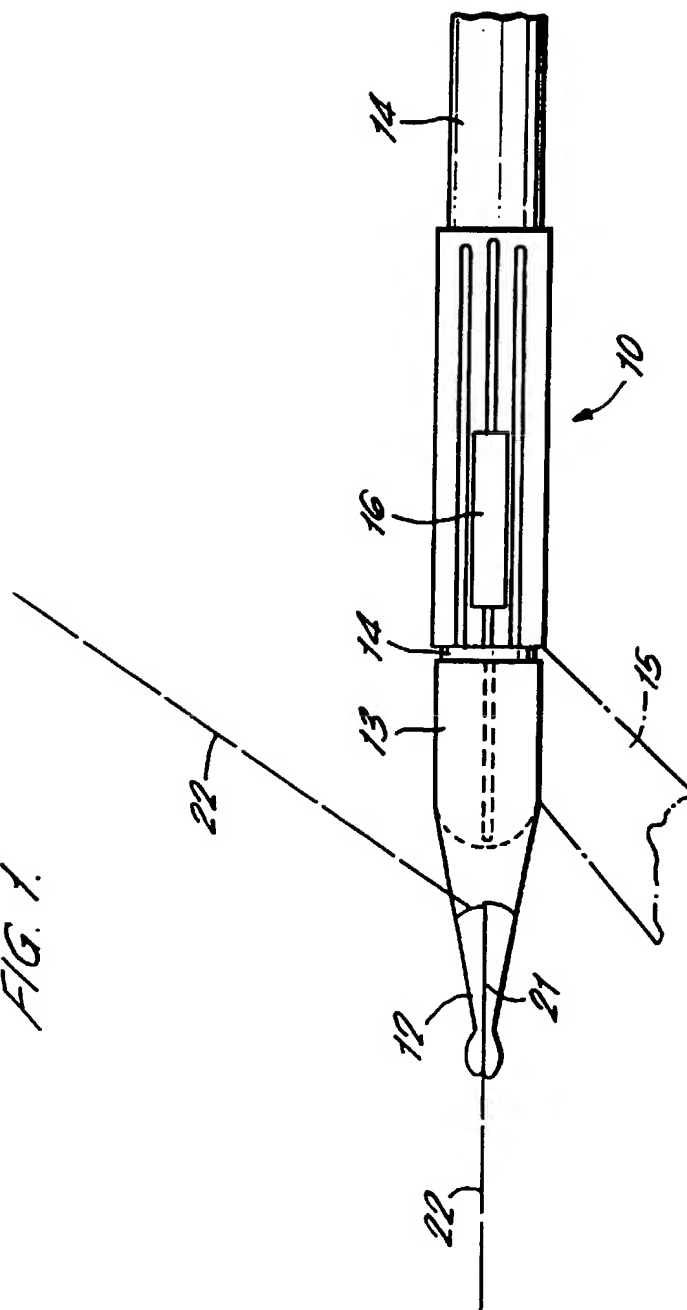
(54) Hook release device

(57) A device, preferably, for use in fishing to enable the release of an object such as a fish from a hook, fly or other sharp point, comprises a nose portion 12 adapted to engage and support a hook 24 and means for attaching the device to a substantially rigid shaft, (14) (Fig. 1) nose portion having a hollow channel 20 along at least a part of its length for receiving a flexible line 22.



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FIG. 1.



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FIG. 2.

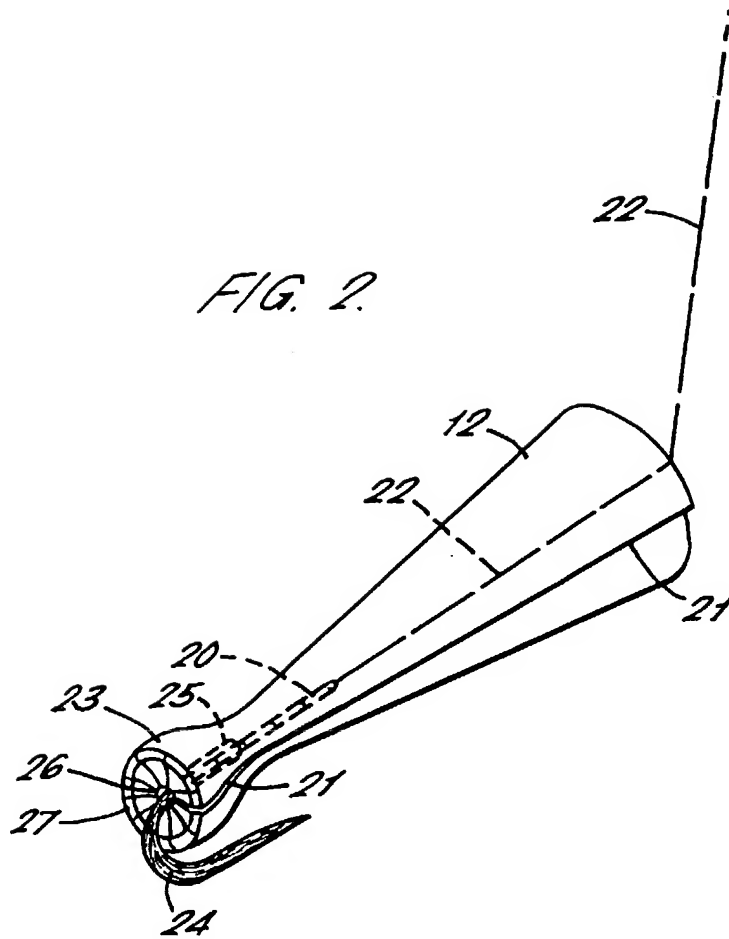
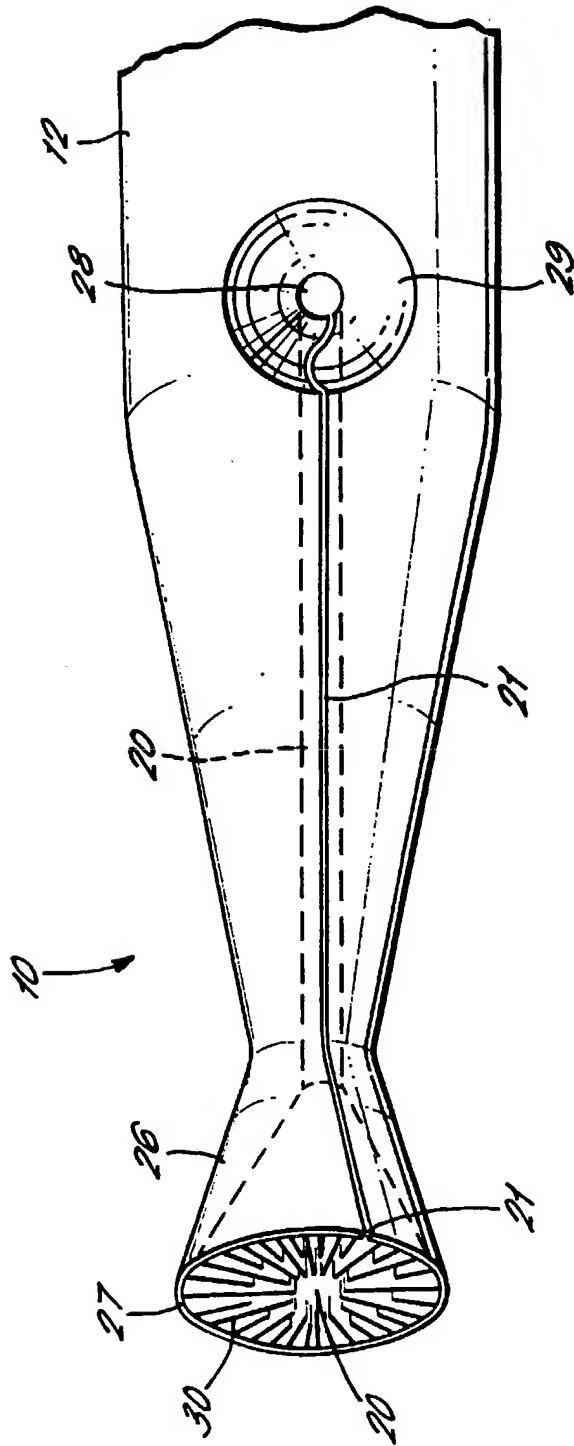
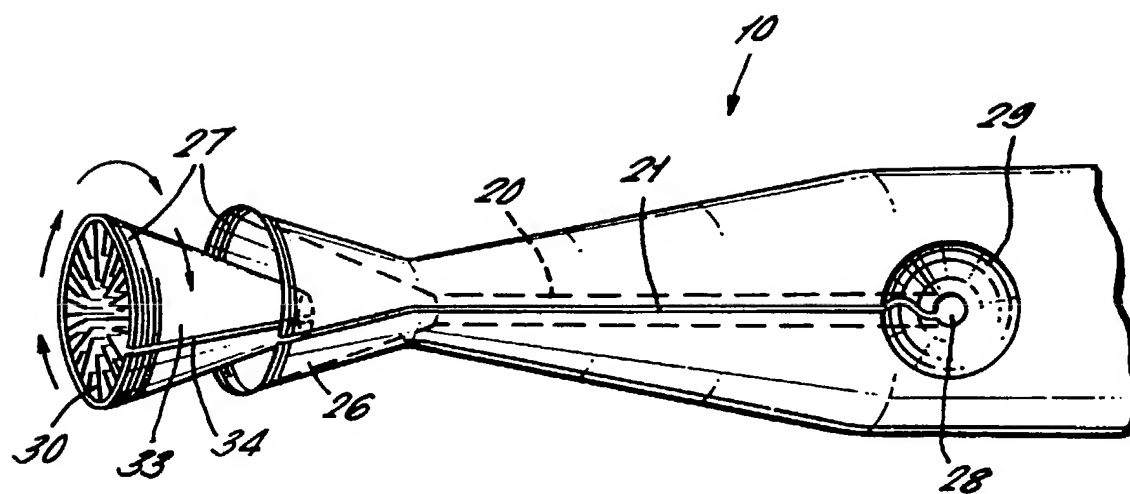


FIG. 3.



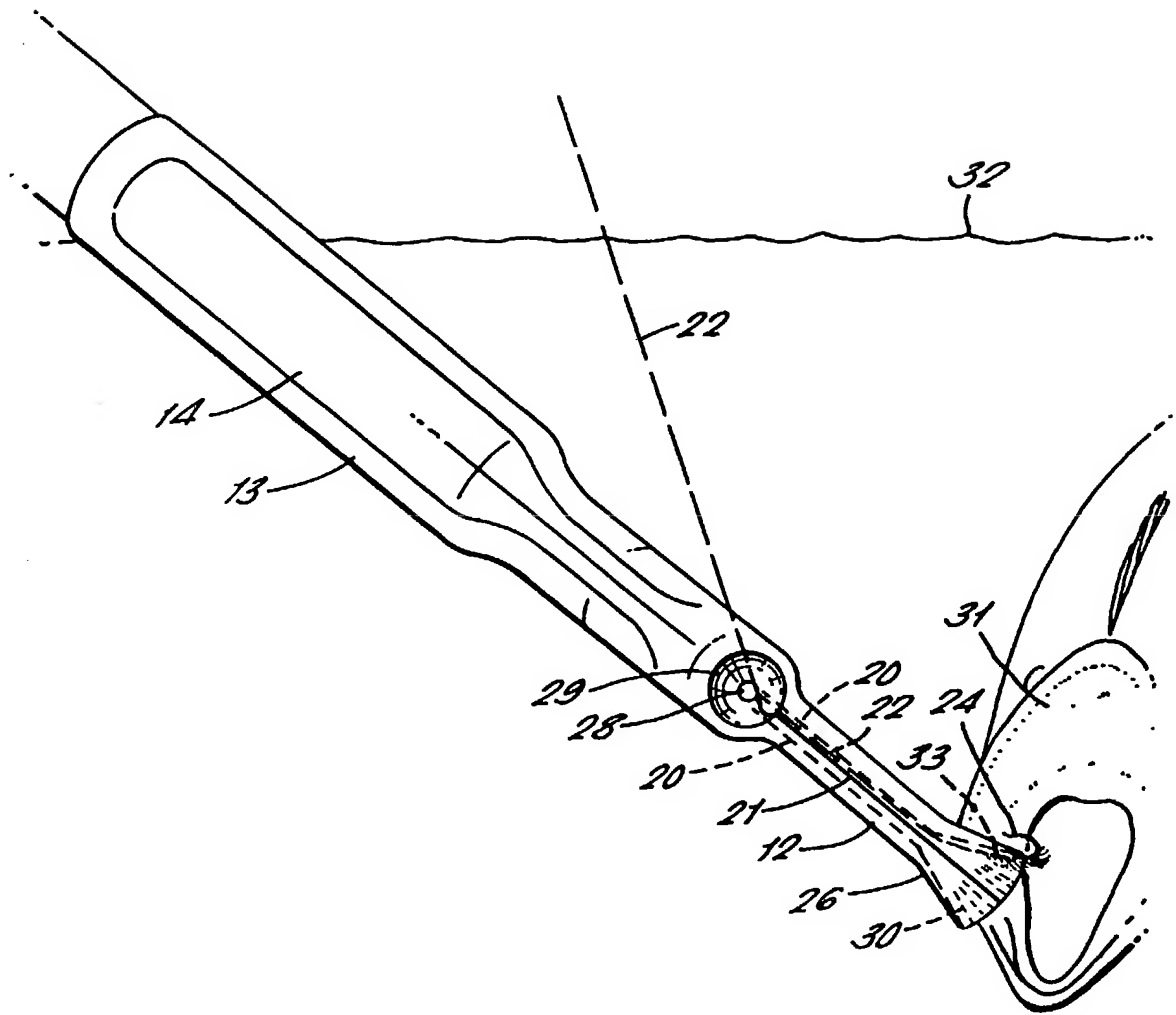
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FIG. 4.



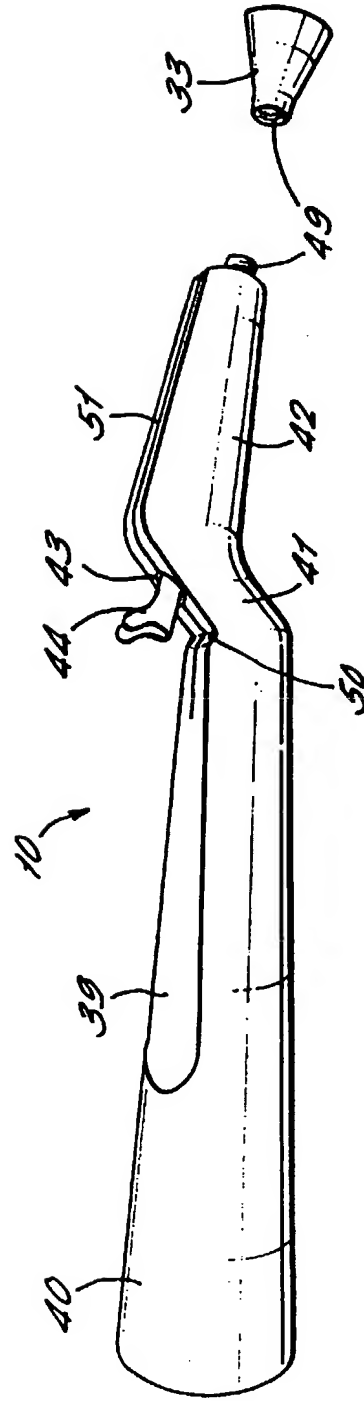
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FIG. 5.

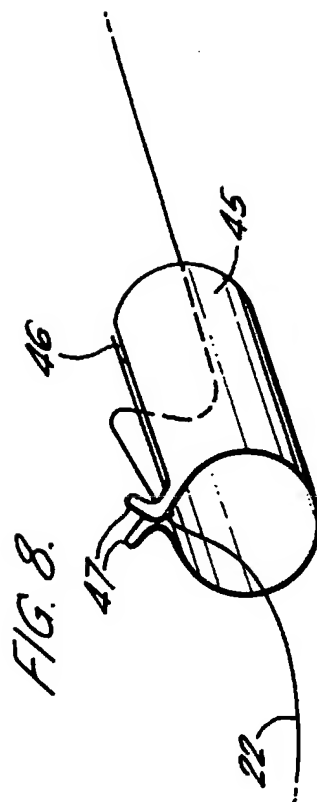
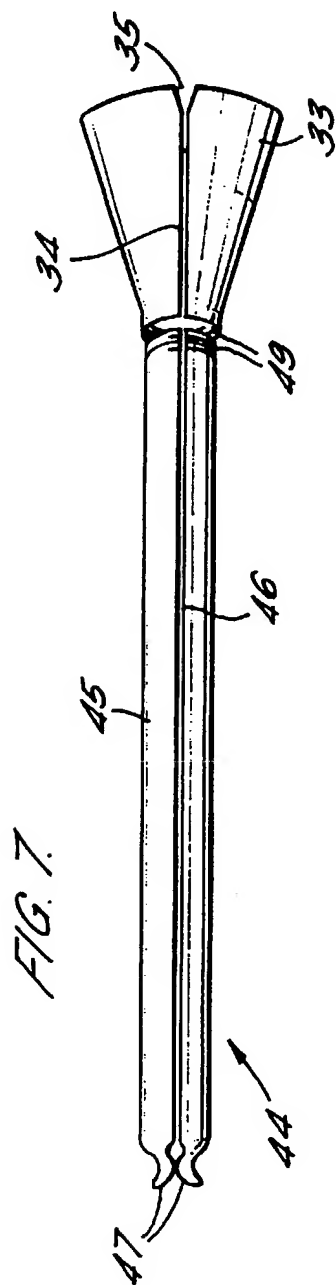


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FIG. 6.







RELEASE DEVICE

This invention relates to a device, preferably,  
for use in fishing to enable the release of an object  
5 such as a fish from a hook, fly or other sharp point.

Many anglers practice the method of "catch and  
release", that is returning fish that have been caught  
to the water after releasing them from the hook. Most  
anglers net the fish, unhook them on the bank and  
10 throw them back. Unfortunately this results in  
scarred and injured fish and inevitable fatalities.  
To release a fish unharmed it must remain in the  
water, where it should be unhooked. Plenty of anglers  
have broken expensive rods trying to unhook a fish  
15 with the rod tip, which is too flexible to achieve  
this effectively. The only feasible way to release a  
fish whilst leaving it in the water is to reach into  
the water to unhook a fish manually, but this can be  
dangerous particularly for those who are not  
20 particularly young, fit or agile. Some anglers have  
come to grief, precariously reaching into the water to  
unhook a fish.

An object of the present invention is to produce  
a device to enable the release of a fish from a hook  
25 or fly without lifting the fish out of the water and  
without an angler having to lean into the water to  
place his hands in the water or leave the safety of  
the bank.

Accordingly the present invention provides a  
30 device for releasing an object from a hook or the like  
attached to a flexible line, comprising a nose portion  
adapted to engage and support a hook and means for  
attaching the device to a substantially rigid shaft,  
said nose portion having a hollow channel along at  
35 least a part of its length for receiving a flexible

line.

Various embodiments of fish release device, in accordance with the invention, will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 is a side view of a fish release device according to the invention attached to a pole;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of one form of a nose piece of the fish release device of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of another form of nose piece for use with the device of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a perspective view showing another form of nose piece for use with the device of Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 shows the nose piece of Fig. 3 in use with a fly;

Fig. 6 is a side view of an alternative embodiment of a fish release device according to the invention;

Fig. 7 is a plan view of a clip used in the fish release device of Fig. 6; and

Fig. 8 is an enlarged perspective view of an end of the clip of Fig. 7.

Referring first to Figs. 1 and 2, the fish release device 10 comprises a nose piece 12 preferably of substantially rigid plastics material, attached to an expandable sleeve 13. The sleeve 13 is adapted to fit on the end of a substantially rigid shaft 14 and be firmly fastened therearound. The fastening means can be any suitable means, an example of which is VELCRO (Trade Mark) material. The sleeve 13 may also be provided with a strap 15 which can be wrapped around the shaft 14 as seen at 16 to assist in the attachment and to provide a ridged grip for the shaft 16.

The shaft 16 is preferably the handle of an

angling net which is a standard item of fishing equipment and has a long reach. Alternatively the shaft 16 may be a suitably sized stick picked up from the bank of the river or a dedicated, preferably  
5 telescopic, pole. Where a dedicated pole 16 is used, the sleeve 13 and strap 15 may be redundant as the fish release device 10 could be formed integrally on the end of the pole 16.

10 The fish release device 10 may be made of or coated with luminous material so that it is easy to locate.

As best seen in Fig. 2, the nose piece 12 has a central channel 20 extending along its axis and a slit 21 along one side communicating with the channel 20  
15 providing access for a length of fishing line 22 into the channel 20. The end 23 of the channel 20 furthest from the sleeve 13 is wide enough to accommodate the shank of a hook or fly 24 and has an internal sleeve 25 for stabilising the hook 24. The nose piece 12 may  
20 be provided with a conically flared end 26 in an outwardly direction to help guide the shank of the hook 24 into the channel 20. The slit 21 is partly defined by an overlapping piece of material which provides a one way clip for the line 22, which runs  
25 freely in channel 20. The end 27 of the nose piece 12 is formed with a rubber or other soft material lip to grip the gape of the hook 24 and protect the fish.

The nose piece 12 may be detachable (for example by screwing) and replaceable by a nose piece 12  
30 designed to accommodate a different sized hook 24.

In use, with the hooked fish in the water, the fishing line 22 is slackened and fed into the channel 20 through the nose piece 12 via slit 21. The shaft 14 is then lowered so that the fish release device 10  
35 slides down the line 22 into the water (in a similar

manner to that used to net a fish) to engage the hook or fly 24 and stabilise it relative to the shaft 14. The fish may now be able to flick itself off the hook 24 or alternatively the shaft 14 can be flicked to  
5 detach the hook 24 from the fish. All this can be done without removing the fish from the water or the fisherman assuming a dangerous position in which he may fall in the water. The fish is thus released safely and unharmed.

10 The fish release device 10 may also include a crook or cradle for supporting a fish while it recovers after the hook 24 has been released.

Because hooks and flies (that is hooks with dressings) come in a wide variety of sizes, both as to  
15 the size of the hook, length of shank and fatness of dressing, Figs. 3 to 5 show modified nose pieces 12 designed to accommodate a wider size gauge of hooks and flies.

As can be seen in Fig. 3 the modified nose piece  
20 12 has a central channel 20 into which the fishing line 22 can be fed via the slit 21. As in the previous embodiment, the nose piece end 26 is conically flared in an outwardly direction and is provided with a soft lip 27. The end 28 of the  
25 channel 20 nearest the sleeve 13 terminates in a sidewardly opening aperture having a lip 29 extending through 360° allowing the end of the line 22, connected to the reel, to rotate fully around.

The inner surface of the conical nose piece end  
30 26 is provided with a series of flexible fins 30 extending radially inwardly towards the central channel 20. These may be replaced by fibres or other inserts and serve to stabilise and trap the shank of the hook 24 or fly dressing 33 adjacent the rim or  
35 outer part of the conical end 26, as seen in Fig. 5.

Thus any movement between the line 22 and the hook or fly 24 is eliminated. The solid nose piece 12 can then be used to flick the hook out of the mouth 31 of a fish below the water surface 32.

5        In the embodiment of the invention shown in Fig. 4, the nose piece 12 is provided with an outwardly flared conical insert 33 with inner fins 30 as in the embodiment of Fig. 3. This conical insert 33 is inserted into and attached to the conical end 26, for example by screwing. Several such attachments  
10        suitable for different flies or hooks 24 or other methods of fishing could be provided. The conical insert 33 is provided with a slit 34 which is aligned with the slit 21 to receive the fishing line 22.

15        A further embodiment of the fish release device 10 is shown in Figs. 6 to 8.

      In this embodiment of the invention the nose piece 12 and expandible sleeve 13 is replaced by a one-piece rigid, generally tubular body 40 which can  
20        be push-fit or screwed onto the end of the shaft 14. The body 40 has a stepped section 41 so that its nose 42 will be angled downwards following the gradient of the fishing line 22 from the bank. This angled section 42 also serves as a more efficient probe in  
25        the location of the hook or fly 24 in the fish's mouth. At the base of the stepped section 41 is a V-shaped groove 50. The nose section 42 is provided with a channel 43 into which is inserted a rotatable two-way clip 44.

30        Just before the stepped section 41, the tubular body 40 has a bevelled top edge 39. This makes it easier to move and use the clip 44.

      This clip 44 comprises a tubular section 45 having a slit 46 along its length to receive fishing  
35        line 22. Formed at one end of the tubular section 45

are a pair of arms 47 in a generally V-shaped formation. These arms 47 have a triple purpose in providing a handle by which the clip 44 can be rotated relative to the body 40, providing for easy location  
5 of the fishing line 22 when inserting it into the slit 46 and acting as a clip in their own right. The clip 44 is of a length longer than the bore 43 in the nose section 42 and can be moved axially relative thereto when the clip 44 is in its non-restraining position.  
10 The clip 44 is also removable from the body 40 for cleaning purposes.

This embodiment of the invention is also provided with a conical insert 33 for attachment to the end of the clip 44. The conical insert 33 has a slit 34  
15 along its length which opens out to a V-shaped gap 48 which is designed to open to receive the fishing line 22 and close under pressure when the insert 33 is pushed into the nose section 42. The end of the clip 44 and conical insert 33 are provided with screw  
20 threads 49 to facilitate their engagement and means are provided to ensure that the slits 34 and 46 are aligned when the conical insert 33 and clip 44 are engaged. The size of the conical insert 33 can be selected according to the size and type of hook or fly  
25 24 being used. If a barbed hook is used, the conical insert 33 may be adapted to cover the barb.

In use, the fish release device 10 is first prepared in that the clip 44 is pushed forwards so that the V-shaped gap 35 protrudes from the nose  
30 section 42 and opens out. The fishing line 22 is then slackened and fed into the V-shaped gap 48 through the slits 34 and 46 which are aligned with slit 51 in the nose section 42 and between the arms 47 of the clip 44. The clip 44 is pushed rearwards so that the  
35 conical insert 33 withdraws into the nose section 42.

The clip 44 is rotated so that the arms 47 are located within the groove 50, thereby securing the clip 44 and conical insert 33 and preventing the fishing line 22 from escaping (as the slits 34 and 46 are moved out of alignment with slit 51) whilst allowing it to run freely within the device 10. The shaft 14 is lowered so that the fish release device 10 slides along the line 22 down into the water to engage the gape of the hook or fly 24 and stabilise it relative to the shaft 14, in particular preventing sideways movement of the hook 24. As the hook or fly 24 engages over the tapering lip 27 of the fish release device 10 it is effectively blunted to minimise any further damage to the fish or to surrounding vegetation or the angler himself. The fish may now be able to flick itself off the hook 24 or the pole 14 can be flicked to detach the hook 24 from the fish.

When the fish release device 10 is removed from the water, the hook or fly 24 can easily be removed by unclipping the arms 47 from slot 50 and pushing the clip 44 forward. This causes the conical insert 33 to protrude from the nose section 42 thereby releasing the hook or fly 24 from the nose section 42. The line 22 can then be removed from the device 10 by locating it within the V-section 35 in the conical insert 33 and pulling it backwards out and between the arms 47.

The fish release device 10 illustrated in Figs. 6 to 8 can be further adapted in a number of ways. It may be fitted to plastic or rubber tubing which has a rubber thin-like thread which, because of its thickness, will adapt to fit on to net handles, poles, priest handles etc. of varying thicknesses.

Clearly, the fish release device 10 can be made from a variety of appropriate materials, such as plastic, metal or wood. As mentioned previously, it



may be coated with a fluorescent material to make it easy to see.

5       The release device 10 may, also have a possible medical use that it can be used to follow a thread to locate a sharp point and blunt it. It could be useful in removing foreign objections from the body once the line has been attached to the sharp point.

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CLAIMS:

1. A device for releasing an object from a hook or the like attached to a flexible line, comprising a nose portion adapted to engage and support a hook and means for attaching the device to a substantially rigid shaft, said nose portion having a hollow channel along at least a part of its length for receiving a flexible line.
2. A device as claimed in claim 1 in which the device is integral with the substantially rigid shaft.
3. A device as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 in which the channel has an external slit.
4. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the device is provided with line retaining means.
5. A device as claimed in claim 4 in which the line retaining means are movable between a line retaining position and a line releasing position.
6. A device as claimed in claim 4 or claim 5 in which the line retaining means comprise a tubular body portion having a slit along its length located within said channel.
7. A device as claimed in claim 6 in which the line retaining means further comprise a pair of V-shaped arms located at one end of the tubular body portion.
8. A device as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 7 in which the line retaining means is movable axially

relative to the nose portion.

9. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding  
claims further comprising a conical portion located  
5 within an end of the nose portion.

10. A device as claimed in claim 9 in which the  
conical portion is integral with the line retaining  
means.  
10

11. A device as claimed in claim 9 in which the  
conical portion is removably attached to the line  
retaining means.

12. A device as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11  
in which the conical portion is provided with hook  
supporting means.  
15

13. A device as claimed in claim 12 in which the hook  
supporting means comprise a plurality of inwardly  
directed elements.  
20

14. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding  
claims in which the conical portion has a slit along  
its length, opening to form a V-shaped gap at an end  
of the slit at the widest part of the cone.  
25

15. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding  
claims in which the nose portion has at its end a thin  
lip adapted to engage the gape of the hook.  
30

16. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding  
claims in which the external surface of the nose  
portion tapers inwardly.  
35

17. A device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 15 in which the surface of the nose portion tapers outwardly.

5 18. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the device comprises a body, one end of which is adapted for attachment to a shaft and the other end of which forms the nose portion.

10 19. A device as claimed in claim 18 in which the nose portion is angled downwardly relative to the body.

15 20. A device as claimed in claim 18 or claim 19 in which the body has a stepped section adjacent the nose portion.

20 21. A device as claimed in any one of claims 18 to 20 in which the body is substantially tubular and has a bevelled surface along a part of the length of the body.

25 22. A device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

<b>Patents Act 1977</b> <b>Examiner's report to the Comptroller under Section 17 12</b> <b>(The Search report)</b>	Application number GB 9506864.9
<b>Relevant Technical Fields</b>  (i) UK Cl (Ed.N)     A1A (A5, A7) (ii) Int Cl (Ed.6)     A01K 97/18, 97/24  <b>Databases (see below)</b> (i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications.  (ii)	Search Examiner R F PHAROAH
	Date of completion of Search 14 JUNE 1995
	Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :- 1-22

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<b>A:</b> Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.	<b>&amp;:</b> Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
X	GB 2100102 A (GIULIANO) see page 1, lines 121-126	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 18, 20, 21
X	GB 1589193 A (HARRISON) see page 2, lines 45-63	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 15, 18, 20, 21
X	GB 776943 A (STRINGER) see page 1, lines 42-45	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 18, 20, 21
X	GB 683231 A (HOWORTH) see page 2, lines 72-103	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
X	US 4433501 A (MAXWELL) see column 2, lines 24-27	1, 3, 4, 18
X	US 4014130 A (ROBERTS) see column 2, lines 31-41	1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17

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